



FOOD ASSISTANCE ACTION COMMITTEE

A Federal, State and County Partnership for policy interpretation and review, food stamp outreach, Quality Control and corrective action activities.

MINUTES

DATE: TUESDAY April 28th, 2009

**LOCATION: Riverside County DPSS
3950 Reynolds Road
Riverside , California**

- 1. Review of Previous Minutes-** There were no corrections to the minutes with the exception of the page number. San Joaquin representative asked if there was any clarification to the hold harmless timeframe for rules affected by the stimulus package. Lisa Kim responded that the 04/09 through 09/09 review months is firm.
- 2. RADEP Report -** Kim Murdock provided written synopsis of her information.
 - Starting with the March review month, the QC interview type must be answered if the issuance level is \$100 or less.
 - Starting with the April review month, 010-012 modified federal fund only. This was modified for changes due to the Stimulus Bill for error tolerance temporary change.
 - For April and continuing, 010-S001 cannot be left blank. Include the correct FS allotment. Richard Trujillo added a new modification will be needed for errors of \$26 -\$49. Although these dollars in error will be coded as correct cases, they need to be tracked for the hold harmless period.
- 4. FS Program Policy Updates -** Leanne Torres provided an update.

Legislative Update

- 1) AB 643 Skinner...Mandates ICT for Food Stamps to eliminate any break in aid. CDSS and CWDA do not favor this bill.
- 2) AB 719 Lowenthal...Will set up TFDS for FC kids who are aging out of the FC system. State plans to handle this requirement through the waiver process.

- 3) There is a pending bill (CalWORKs lead) for movement to semi-annual reporting.

Court Litigation

Loaves and Fishes – County close to an agreement.

Heathcock – OI NOAs is getting close to settlement and will require and budget worksheet attached to the NOA.

BeVu – on track

Sim Pich – CalWIN is being challenged due to certain inefficiencies. First suit was dismissed but the WRO has refilled.

Policy Development

* Expanded Categorical Eligibility would waive the resource test for families with children under the age of 18. Should be implemented by January 2010.

* American Recovery Reinvestment Act rules for implementation are coming along, but work needs to be done on sections for over-issuance computation. San Bernardino indicated they are using the Federal Q and A. Dave Bailey stated that there may be changes to that guideline. Specific issues center around when the over-claims occur on an OI.

Questions and Answers

* FOB Richard Trujillo asked about the changes to the Rights and Responsibilities that would allow us to exclude deductions when a client failed to provide notification or verifications. There are concerns regarding the APHSA letter to FNS regarding the Comparison I calculation . FNS will postpone FNS 310 rules changes until the October '09 sample. San Bernardino does not want the language in the R and R's because it would negatively impact the error rate. FNS will be discussing the issue in headquarters next week. State Policy was asked to postpone the changes until we have more federal input. Counties were instructed to not apply the new QC Policy memo that came out recently on this topic at this time. CDSS will not move forward on any form changes until more QC clarification is received.

* San Joaquin asked about the state policy on the \$25. UIB increase from Stimulus funds. Is a state policy forthcoming? Leanne Torres stated the income should be counted in the FS and CW and no directive is forthcoming.

* Pat Cruise stated that federal legislation in March extended Afghanis participation for 2 more months. More federal guidance will go to the state soon Leanne stated they are ready to go with the state policy guidelines when the federal rules are received.

* ExtraNet posting of minutes has been updated for 2009, but 2008 have not been posted. Still need the quarterly Q and A's and links for ACIN and ACL's.

5. CDSS Field Operations Bureau (FOB) Updates

Error Rates Actives/Negatives

Effective through the November Review month rates are as follows:

Audit Type	California	Nat'l Average
ACTIVE	5.24%	5.55%
NEGATIVES	19.6%	10.02%

Richard indicated the negative error rate was up 27% from this time last year. He encouraged counties to develop additional audit data on the negatives as the sample size is too small to accurately identify trends. San Bernardino representative indicated their county is actually auditing more stringently than federal requirements. Lisa Kim said FNS is very interested to know what the real reasons are for the actual denials, rather than what is stated on NOMI's or NOA's...i.e. client failed to keep appointment/provide verifications. Riverside indicated that it is believed that many denials for those reasons are actually valid because people are ineligible and do not want to finish the applications. FNS needs more information on what the case circumstances really are to determine the causes and is very interested in any type of QA or Supervisor review data.

LA County asked for audit guidelines. Richard suggested that all counties with negative action to get together and go over their tools to come up with guidelines for these reviews. Kern County asked if CDSS could mandate a requirement for negative reviews to ensure collection of the data. Lisa Kim responded it would be nice if the data was consistent to analyze the issue. Counties with negative action audit tools are Fresno, Santa Clara, San Bernardino, LA, Orange, Merced, San Joaquin and San Diego. Kern and Tulare do a 100% Intake Review but keep no statistics. Stanislaus, Santa Clara and Contra Costa do supervisor reviews but do not keep statistics.

After a lengthy discussion on the lack of information on error specifics, Lisa again stressed the need for counties to provide CDSS with error data. Counties restated they first need to know what information to collect. Dave Bailey stated that California is on the national list for review of negative actions because of our high error rate, and we can expect that Federal Corrective Actions will be required statewide....as early as August.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Counties are to provide any information available to FOB (Richard Trujillo).
- Counties are to send copies of their audit tools to RT.
- Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Fresno and Santa Clara will meet and develop standardized items to be reviewed.
- Richard will send a letter to the counties to initiate negative reviews.

QC Sample Completion Rates

Completion rates through November is 81%. Last year, we were at 84.1%. We need to be at 98% to avoid a penalty. Counties were encouraged to work on their Code 3 Drops whenever possible.

Federal Differences/Arbitrations

No information was provided.

QC Policy Updates/Releases

QC Retention of Files transmittal will be coming out next week.

Counties will also receive a transmittal on collecting data for errors between \$26 and \$49. as well.

QC Training Requests

All training requests should be sent to Marlene Fleming at FOB.

QC Changes No additional changes other than those referenced above.

Counties concerns

1) QC Policy Memo 09-01 San Bernardino is waiting on a federal difference issue. CDSS is still waiting for a response from FNS although we know that the feds agreed with the state's position.

2) QC File Structure Desk Guidelines – Counties want to know what is really needed for Negative action reviews...in particular those cases that are Code 2 DROPS. Why do we need the SAWS 1, S of F and other documentation when the case could not be completed? FNS (Dawn) said we need to include the documentation for timeliness of processing for the application. However, you need the comments and other items to look for the legitimacy of the drops as that code. Some DROP Code 2's should be CODE 3's. FNS want the ability to review California cases in other FNS regions. These new rules were put together to ensure other regions could do this.

3) Fresno challenged why we review for ES if the client had not requested ES. Lisa Kim stated that it is the State's responsibility to screen for ES whether or not the client requested it. FNS regulations are written so that states will issue ES even though client is not requesting it. See CFR 273.212, regarding responsibility for screening for ES at the time of application.

Dave Bailey added that FNS has cited states for not screening properly, thus not identifying those who are actually requesting it. Also, if you find out later (after the original app date) you need to process ES from the date of discovery.

7. FS Field Operations Bureau Management Evaluation Updates

2009 Schedule of Reviews 13 of the counties have been completed with 17 remaining. Please note the changes from the old schedule.

Corrective Action Issues - FOB ME group is creating a CAP for FNS. A major emphasis is being placed on negative actions. At this time, no plans have been made to request specific information on negatives from counties because there is no uniform way to collect information.

Fresno asked that counties receive a copy of the CAP that CDSS will be submitting to FNS. San Bernardino asked how a plan could be developed without county input.

ACTION ITEM: CDSS will provide counties with a copy of the final plan.

SEP Funds

Pat Cruise asked why there was nothing on the agenda regarding the FS Conference. FNS want Cali8fornia to have one and want to know what is happening. Richard Trujillo indicated that CDSS is looking at a one day conference in Sacramento...no hotel...just travel. Conference agenda could include the following:

- Negative reviews
- Business process and policy changes
- How to process more applications faster
- Non-mandatory verifications
- C4 Yourself
- Case Documentation and over-verifying
- Combined workers (San Bernardino, Orange, Ventura, LA, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Contra Cost, Solano and Tulare all have combined MC and NAFS workers.)

Riverside again suggested that if there is to be a one-day conference, we should look at having one in the North and one in the South. It was suggested that San Bernardino has a good room in Rialto that could accommodate a large number of people.

County Volunteers included Tulare, LA, Fresno, Riverside.

FEDS may get more money for SEP...will know in May.

8. USDA FNS Federal Updates

Operations - the wonderful, Pat Cruise

Kevin Contannon may be appointed the new FNS Deputy. This may bring new priorities...like more proponents of Farmers Markets.

Symposium on Business Processes - Presentation by Washington, Arizona and some counties. High level managers attended and said that counties need to act on a consortia level for process changes. There is a desire to use stimulus money for the benefit of all counties within the consortia. Money must be spent by the end of the FFY.

Statewide Disaster Training – will be done starting tomorrow in San Bernardino for CIV. IA is May 18th. Ple4asantville on July 18th.

Outreach – Orange County received \$75,000 to continue efforts.

Northeast Regional Conference – will be held in Massachusetts on June 9-11. Pat recently sent our information on this to all FAAC members. There are no SEP funds available.

Stimulus Report – FNS will be tracking the number of jobs created by these funds. Pat Cruise is looking for stories of people who have benefited from stimulus money. Please contact her. .

Quality Control – Dawn Baker

California has not yet been included in the swap for regional switches. Region Nine is doing Georgia and New Hampshire. They gave up Idaho and Arizona. Georgia is struggling with development of imaged files. Aside from some minor technical issues, no problems have been identified.

Dawn reported that FNS is still getting some paper files that were inadvertently sent to them from counties...instead of to FNS. Richard Trujillo indicated that this is being corrected with the particular counties.

9. County Reports

FAAC Mailing List. – Richard indicated he is attempting to get the YAHOO group fixed. Pat Cruise suggested that the list be compared to the one maintained by Riverside County Kelly Tatman from Riverside will do the comparison.

UIB Stimulus - San Bernardino pointed out that the additional \$25 UIB stimulus money is not included on IEVS/PVS. The only way to verify the amount is on the actual check receipt received by the client. This is causing confusion because of what the client should be reporting includes the UIB stimulus and it must be used in the FS budget. However, since IEVS shows a different amount, the line staff are becoming confused. Since the income must be included in the budget, counties need to know if the hold harmless rules apply to this benefit. FNS will confirm this interpretation and report back to Richard Trujillo.

ADJOURN – NEXT Meeting June 23rd in Sacramento

Submitted By:

Daphne Criswell, Regional Manager Riverside County